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Advances in diagnostics in lung cancer

Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer related deaths in most countries. Most (but not all) lung cancers are associated with tobacco smoking. Up until recent times, the diagnosis was in most cases based on histology and use of immunohistochemistry to classify lung epithelial tumors into small cell vs non-small cell (squamous and adeno) carcinomas. With the advent of better understanding of the biology of lung cancer, especially underlying oncogenic driver mutations, the hunt to develop targets to these mutations has increased manifold. This has led to the discovery of actionable mutations like EGFR, ALK and ROS-1. Current guidelines include testing for these driver mutations, aided primarily by clinical presentation and the histological subtype of tumor. There has also been a prominent focus on liquid biopsies in lung cancer given their innumerable advantages. We have thus witnessed a consequential change in the approach to treatment and survival of these patients. From an average survival of 2-4 months in 1990s, introduction of platinum-based combinations with third-generation agents and more specific cytotoxic drugs, significantly improved survival outcomes to 1-2 years. The newly developed targeted therapy in the appropriate patient population, may provide greater benefit than conventional chemotherapy and may further improve the survival rates in these patients.

Biography

Kunal Sharma is currently working as a Consultant Oncopathologist, Molecular Pathologist & Section Head with SRL Diagnostics, India. He was in past working as Consultant Oncopathologist & Head of Quality Assurance at CORE Diagnostics Pvt. Ltd. He has been a guest faculty & presenter at numerous international and national conferences like Lymphoma & Myeloma Congress- New York, CAP-Chicago, The International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP), Nigerian Medical Association, Dhaka Medical College & Bangladesh association of Hematologists, Indian Cancer Congress, ISMPOCON, YROC, ONCOCON etc. He was the faculty & mentor of the largest National hands on IHC workshop (D-I-Y) at JNMC, Belgavi. He has numerous international publications including first reported case of Cellular Ovarian Fibroma in India. He completed his MBBS with aggregate of 73% and received his Post-graduate training (DNB) in Oncopathology from HCG Cancer Hospital, Bangalore

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